

March, 1946

## FACT SHEET ON POULTRY CULLING

### The Problem

President Truman has directed the Department of Agriculture to develop ways by which grain, now being used in poultry and livestock feeds, can be conserved for direct use as human food to meet a crisis in many parts of the world.

As a result of the critical world shortage of cereals and feed grains, it has become increasingly important to hold egg and poultry production, as well as that of other livestock, within the limits established by the 1946 goals. National goals call for 15 percent fewer eggs, 17 percent fewer chickens raised on farms, and a 13 percent cut in laying flocks as compared with 1945 levels of production.

The necessity of grain conservation also demands that, in adjusting poultry flocks to meet goal requirements, every effort be made to cull for the additional purpose of efficiency in feed utilization for egg and meat production.

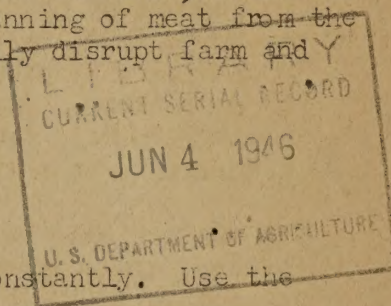
The culling of laying flocks to conserve grain will serve the further purpose of helping to hold 1946 egg production within the official goal and to avoid an oversupply during the flush production season this spring. With production still geared potentially to the wartime rate, temporary surpluses are likely unless culling is done immediately within goal requirements which call for 15 percent fewer eggs than in 1945. Production of eggs at the reduced level is expected to provide for all requirements this year, domestic, foreign, and military.

Every effort should be made to encourage poultry consumption on farms, local and nearby consumption, storage in freezer lockers and home canning of meat from the fowls culled. A heavy marketward movement could temporarily disrupt farm and market prices.

### The Solution

To meet this problem, producers are advised to:

1. Start orderly culling now; cull heavily and cull constantly. Use the official goals as a guide.
2. Keep the most efficient laying hens and pullets and the most rapidly developing meat birds. Maintain laying flocks with the greatest possible percentage of pullets.
3. Avoid market congestion by encouraging increased consumption of chickens in your community, by using them at home, and by home canning and storage in food lockers of chickens that cannot be used immediately. This is very important at the present time when storage stocks are large.
4. Plan your order for early baby chicks on the basis of your feed supply, both current and prospective. Early hatched pullet chicks, to replace culled hens, will consume less feed this spring and produce more eggs next fall when egg prices are seasonally high.





5. Don't waste feed. See that feed hoppers and troughs are not filled too full so as to cause waste. The State College or Extension Service can furnish plans and suggestions for building or improving feeding equipment.

About three-fourths of all hens and pullets are in farm flocks. The culling of a few birds from each flock will decrease the consumption of scarce grain for feed. At any time of year there are a few non-laying hens in the average farm flock. These, together with slow-maturing pullets that have not started to lay and the hens that start "going broody" early, can be culled to the advantage of efficient egg production and be used at home for food. Such culling always helps to increase the profit from egg production, because non-layers are the "star boarders" of the henhouse — they eat without paying. It takes one good layer to pay for the feed of each star boarder.

The non-producing birds culled out of laying flocks will not create a market problem if they are eaten at home by the farm family or consumed by their neighbors in nearby towns and villages. When there are more culled birds than can be used immediately in such ways, they can be kept for future use by home canning or by freezing in food lockers.

Remember that various industries and producers of livestock as well as poultrymen are being called upon to make adjustments in the present emergency.

The combined efforts of all producers will help materially toward the conservation of the grain needed to meet the world-wide food crisis.

President Truman has called for this wholehearted cooperation in a Nation-wide effort "to win this world-wide war against mass starvation."

#### Consumer-Use Program

In support of producers who are being asked to cull their laying flocks to help conserve feed, there will be a Nation-wide consumer-use program for eggs and poultry. This program will be sponsored cooperatively by the USDA and industry organizations. Its goal will be the greatest possible consumer use of eggs and poultry to help avoid development of temporary oversupplies which would necessitate operation of Government price-support programs.

To achieve this result, every effort will be made through the medium of newspapers, trade journals, magazines, radio stations, and networks to keep consumers conscious of the availability of eggs and poultry at seasonally attractive prices and the fact that they are nutritious and necessary foods.

Because quality of a product is an important factor in achieving maximum domestic consumption, producers, handlers, and retail distributors should do everything possible to conserve top quality. This may require special effort in view of critical shortages in containers, transportation, and labor.

Producers, however, can help minimize the effect of such shortages by repairing wooden cases, asking for the quick return of cases in which eggs are sold locally, and by keeping watch for signs of the overcrowding of transportation and processing facilities. Shipments should be planned at times when such facilities are in the best position to handle them.